



## Hoosier Heartland Adoption Newsletter

\*\*\* Serving adoptive families in Indiana \*\*\*

Volume 1 Issue 1

In this issue:

Emotional Regulatory Parenting, An Adoption Story, Conferences, Services Support Groups, Resources and more!

### Welcome!!!!

My name is Ann Arvidson and I am the new SNAP (Special Needs Adoption Program) Specialist for Pre and Post Adoption services. This position grew out of an awareness of the need for services for the families that adopt children through the SNAP program and others who face the challenges that adoption brings to families every day.

It is said in the State of Indiana that more than 70% of our special needs children are adopted by their foster parents. I certainly represent that statistic, and I am proud to say this. I have been a foster parent for five years and two years ago we adopted our first child. As the parent of two special needs children I understand that there are days you ask yourself "Why?!" and although we can't answer that question in this newsletter, we will be offering many strategies and opportunities to learn new ways of handling the day to day issues that you face.

This issue is just a beginning and I invite you to email me at [ann.arvidson@dcs.in.gov](mailto:ann.arvidson@dcs.in.gov) with your comments, questions, concerns, and anything you would like to see us consider for this newsletter and website. We have lots of ideas already about what the State should look at and implement, and I hope that as this area grows that we will be filling these pages with exciting offerings brought to you by the great State of Indiana!

Welcome to the Heartland!

## **Emotional Regulatory Parenting (ERP) is Coming Your Way!!**

Juli Alvarado, MA, LPC, NCC is traveling the state of Indiana this fall to bring the concept of Emotional Regulatory Parenting (ERP) to adoptive and foster families. Last February many of us endured the snowy weather to hear her speak in Muncie and it was awe inspiring. If you have tried other therapies or behavior modification techniques and still feel hopeless or at the “end of your rope” this innovative love-based set of strategies may be just for you. ERP is based on the idea that when a parent can remain in a “regulated state” it leads to the same in the child thus decreasing negative behaviors.

Beginning in infancy the body attempts to regulate itself and attachment takes place when they are calmed and their needs are met. When an infant or a child up to three years of age suffers traumatic events the chemistry of the brain and its response to stress is hindered. The child can not be soothed and thus lives in a high stress mode, which in turn affects the way they relate to parents, caregivers, and others as they grow up.

ERP is based on love-based interventions, unlike other models of attachment therapy that are based in “force and control.” Juli, who has served 26 children as a foster parent, will bring to you a new understanding of brain development and the response to stress that traumatized children bring to the table. Those behaviors that were once “survival techniques” evolve into negative behaviors and when we react in a “regulated” calm manner and stay in relationship with the child, as opposed to sending them to their room or “away,” there is a magical response for all parties.

You will be amazed by this combination of scientific theory and practical strategies for you to try in your home.

**The dates and locations are as follows – MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW – you do not want to miss this opportunity for free and informative training!!!! Exact locations To Be Announced at a later date**

August 2<sup>nd</sup> – Ft. Wayne area

August 4<sup>th</sup> – SAFY Annual Conference

August 25<sup>th</sup> – Evansville area

September 14<sup>th</sup> – Adoption Forum in Indianapolis (scholarships available)

September 29<sup>th</sup> – Gary area

October 13 and 27<sup>th</sup> – one in South Bend and one Jeffersonville

December 1<sup>st</sup> – Indianapolis/Marion County

**PLEASE PLAN ON ATTENDING AND LEARNING A NEW APPROACH TO DEALING WITH SEVERE BEHAVIORS IN YOUR CHILD!!!**

## AN ADOPTION STORY

(Do you have a story to share??? - email Ann Arvidson at: [ann.arvidson@dcs.in.gov](mailto:ann.arvidson@dcs.in.gov) and let others hear your story)

When planning for this issue I got with Suzanne Skinner from the Guardian Scholars Program at Ball State and Ivy Tech who works with youth that have been in the system and supports them in all aspects of their academic endeavors. She gave me the name of the following young woman – and this is her story:

Adoption, the word brings tears of joy to my eyes. When I was 10 years old I was taken from my biological mother's home. I was taken out of home due to physical, emotional and sexual abuse. My biological mother was not stable mentally and neglected to meet my basic needs. I was placed in the home of a family member.

Living with family members caused tension with my biological mother. I was passed from family member to family member until I decided to take my own life; I was taken to the hospital due to an overdose. While at the hospital child welfare intervened again. I was then placed in a psychiatric ward for 24-hour watch. After 30 days of intense care, I was moved to a group home for youth that are implacable in the foster care system. I lived in the group home for over two years while living there I learned many important life skills but still lacked the love a child deserves and desires.

Reunification was a goal for the first two years of placement, but after countless failures on the part of my biological mother termination became the goal of the welfare department. At the age of 13, I was placed in a foster home. My foster parents were Robert and Mallie Sparks of Huntington, Indiana. After moving in and getting settled the termination process began. The process was very short - my Mother gave up her rights without a fight and my biological father was nowhere to be found. As a foster child I felt like I did not fit in. I had many sleepless nights thinking about what would happen when I turned 18, who would I count on and who would care about me.

My whole life changed in December of 2001. My foster parents Robert and Mallie asked me and two other foster children if we wanted to be a part of their forever family. We accepted with no regret. Being adopted changed my whole life. We were all adopted on August 21, 2002. That is the day I started living life. I finally felt like I fit in and like I belonged somewhere. Being adopted eased so many of my worries. I knew whom my future children would call grandma and grandpa, I knew where I would go on holidays, and I had a family that had unconditional love for me. My adoptive parents did not always have an easy road with me. I tested their love and patience. I didn't let my guard down for a long time. So many people have hurt me in my life and I was not going to let them hurt me. After time I slowly let my guard down and let them inside of my heart. They had to teach me to trust and to love. They had to help me understand that they were the parents and I was the child. I had many roadblocks along the way but they were there every step of the way to catch me when I fell.

Without my parents Robert and Mallie, I would not be the person I am today. I would not have achieved the goals I have. May 10, 2007 I will graduate from college with my degree in social work. As a social worker I plan to advocate for the lost children of Indiana, the foster children. Being adopted changed my life forever. Being adopted did not fix all of my issues and problems but it gave me someone to work through them with.

Heidi Jo Sparks

### **Indiana Conferences – Save these dates!!**

#### **Adoption Forum – September 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>**

The 37<sup>th</sup> Adoption Forum will be held at the **Marten House in Indianapolis**. This conference sponsored by the Indiana Association of Adoption and Child Care Services focuses on issues facing adoptive parent, casemanagers and therapists and has been a premier event for many years.

Two keynote speakers will also host workshops on issues of attachment disorder, bullying, lifebooks, and culture to name a few! There are **scholarships available** at a first come first serve basis. Information and the conference brochure is available at:

[www.iaaccs.com](http://www.iaaccs.com)

#### **Indiana Foster Care and Adoption Association Conference - November 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, & 17<sup>th</sup>**

This conference is in its 34<sup>th</sup> years has been well attended because of its great speakers and an opportunity for networking with other foster/adoptive parents.

It will be held at the **Marten House in Indianapolis** and brochures will be available in September. Go to [www.IFCAA.org](http://www.IFCAA.org) for more information.

#### **Healthy Families Institute September 17-19<sup>th</sup> Indiana Government Center**

See their website for more information: [www.theinstituteforfamilies.org](http://www.theinstituteforfamilies.org)

### **Pre and Post Adoption Services**

There are services provided for families throughout the state although what is available greatly varies from county to county. Our goal in the Permanency Unit is to provide a strong support system for adoptive families prior to and after your adoption. We also want to inform you as to the services that are presently available and currently underutilized. We are looking at what other states offer families and hope to develop a model for our state soon. How about an adoption camp? Help with residential treatment costs? Respite? Counseling? An Adoption Registry? Home-based services? Message

Board/Chat room? And more support, support, support for you and your family???? Any ideas? Call or email Ann!!! Now is your time to dream – in a perfect world what could we do or have done to assist you.

There is a listing of services currently provided by county available – it can be accessed at the DCS website at:

<http://www.in.gov/dcs/pdf/programs/StatewideAdoptionProviders.pdf>

### **Adoption Support Groups**

We are trying to gather information about support groups throughout the state. Here is a short list of those we know about if you have any more information about these or any other group or would be interested in helping us form a group in your county please contact Ann Arvidson at [ann.arvidson@dcs.in.gov](mailto:ann.arvidson@dcs.in.gov) or 317-234-4500 and let her know!

Here is a list of what we know so far:

Albion, Indiana - Foster Care Services offers a post adoption support group on the last Monday of each month (holidays excluded) from 6:15 – 8:15 at the county public library. There is an activity group for children 5 and older both adopted and biological. For more information call 1-800-582-4453

Muncie, Indiana – The Delaware County DCS offers an Adoptive/Foster parent support group on the second Tuesday of every month from 6:30-8:30 in the training rooms at the DCS/YOC facility. There is childcare available. Contact Rhande Osborn at 765-287-8477

Indianapolis – Families Reaching for Rainbows – the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health has a support group on the third Tuesday from 6:30-8:30 at Lutheran and Child (16<sup>th</sup> and Ritter) Child care is provided if you pre-register. For support and a good meal call 205-8281.

Indianapolis - Second Time Around Grandparents Program at the Dr. Martin Luther King Multi-Service Center presentation/discussion on the third and fourth Tuesday for grandparents and relatives Dinner and a children's program offered. Also on the fourth Saturday there is a respite care program. You must register call Alice Oliver at 923-4581 extension 242.

Indianapolis – The Villages offers the Family Connection Network Kinship Care Support Group for relative/kinship foster and adoptive families residing in Marion County. They meet twice a month and participate in other support services for kinship caregivers and their children. A IV-B referral is required. Contact Tawanna Clarke at 317-273-7575 or [tclarke@villages.org](mailto:tclarke@villages.org)

Noblesville, Indiana - No information but the contacts are the Gergley's and they can be found at [lovenest@insightbb.com](mailto:lovenest@insightbb.com)

## **RESOURCES**

### **Websites:**

[www.beyondconsequences.com](http://www.beyondconsequences.com)  
[www.coaching-forlife.com](http://www.coaching-forlife.com)  
[www.postinstitute.com](http://www.postinstitute.com)  
[www.childtrauma.org](http://www.childtrauma.org)  
<http://teacher.scholastic.com/professional/bruceperry/attachment.htm>  
[www.attach.org](http://www.attach.org)  
[www.spaulding.org](http://www.spaulding.org)  
[http://www.clarian.org/ebiz/Clarian\\_Birthing\\_Ed/cataloge\\_a.jsp?prodId=prod170001](http://www.clarian.org/ebiz/Clarian_Birthing_Ed/cataloge_a.jsp?prodId=prod170001)

### **Books:**

Beyond Logic Consequences and Control, Bryan Post and Heather Forbes  
The Boy Who was Raised as a Dog, Bruce Perry, MD  
Theraplay: Helping Parents and Children Build Better Relationships through Attachment-based Play, Ann M. Jernberg and Phyllis B. Boot  
Molecules of Emotion, Candace Pert  
Affect Regulation and the Origin of Self, Allan Schore

## **LOOK FOR OUR NEXT ISSUE IN SEPTEMBER!!!**

**GO TO [www.adoptachild.in.gov/dcs](http://www.adoptachild.in.gov/dcs) - click on: Permanency, then Adoption and then Newsletter...you will find us there!!**

**To reach your Regional SNAP Specialist click on:  
What your SNAP Specialist can do for you?**

**Thanks for reading our first issue....keep up the good work you do for the children in Indiana and we will keep working for you!**